

5 What is claimed is:

1. In a video decoder, a method for acquiring a program conveyed on more than one broadcast channel, comprising the steps of:

generating a program guide display listing programs being broadcast on
10 a plurality of broadcast channels during specified broadcast time segments, wherein said program guide display lists a particular program on both a first and a second broadcast channel; and
acquiring said particular program from said first broadcast channel in response to user selection of either of said first and second broadcast channels.

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2. A method according to claim 1, wherein
said particular program is acquired using packet identification and channel tuning information conveyed in one of a plurality of channel maps associating a transmission channel carrier frequency with data identifiers used to capture
20 datastreams constituting said particular program.

3. A method according to claim 2, wherein
said plurality of channel maps are allocated a predetermined priority.

25 4. A method according to claim 1, wherein
said user selection of either of said first and second broadcast channels is performed via selection of a displayed item in said program guide display.

30 5. A method according to claim 1, including the step of
selecting one of said first and second broadcast channels in accordance with predetermined criteria comprising at least one of, (a) channel map priority, and (b) a User program preference profile, (c) a substitution profile downloaded from a remote head-end and (d) geographic region preference information.

5 6. A method according to claim 1, including the step of
 acquiring said particular program from said first broadcast channel
 using a channel map selected in accordance with a predetermined priority.

 7. A method according to claim 6, wherein
10 said channel map associates a transmission channel carrier frequency
 with data identifiers used to capture datastreams constituting said particular program
 conveyed on said first broadcast channel.

 8. A method for substituting a program conveyed on a first broadcast
15 channel for a program conveyed on a second broadcast channel, comprising the steps
 of:

 acquiring a first channel map associating a first transmission channel
 carrier frequency with data identifiers used to capture datastreams constituting a first
 program conveyed on a first broadcast channel;

20 acquiring a second channel map associating a second transmission
 channel carrier frequency with data identifiers used to capture datastreams constituting
 an alternative program conveyed on a second broadcast channel; and

 substituting said alternative program for said first program in response
 predetermined criteria by using said second channel map information to initiate
25 acquisition of said second broadcast channel and said alternative program.

 9. A method according to claim 8, wherein
 said first channel map contains information for use in acquiring
 programs conveyed on a first set of broadcast channels, and
30 said second channel map contains information for use in acquiring an
 alternative program conveyed on an alternative broadcast channel corresponding to
 one of said channels in said first set of broadcast channels.

5 10. A method according to claim 8, including the step of
 examining said acquired second channel map for alternative program
data being conveyed on an alternative broadcast channel in response to a channel
change command.

10 11. A method according to claim 10, including the steps of
 automatically substituting an alternative program and alternative
broadcast channel identified as being available for a User selected channel by said
acquired second channel map, and
 tuning to receive said alternative program and alternative broadcast
15 channel in response to a channel change command.

 12. A method according to claim 8, wherein
 said predetermined criteria comprises at least one of, (a) channel map
priority, and (b) a User program preference profile and (c) a substitution profile
20 downloaded from a remote head-end.

 13. A method according to claim 8, wherein
 said predetermined criteria comprises geographic region information.

25 14. A method according to claim 8, wherein
 a locally broadcast alternative program is substituted for a relatively
remotely broadcast first program.

 15. A method according to claim 8, wherein
30 said predetermined criteria comprises a command derived from a
remote head-end.

 16. A method according to claim 8, including the step of
 re-tuning to acquire one of (a) said first program and (b) a second
35 program different to said alternative and said first program following completion of
said alternative program.

5 17. A method for substituting a program conveyed on a first broadcast channel for a program conveyed on a second broadcast channel, comprising the steps of:

 acquiring a first channel map associating a first transmission channel carrier frequency with data identifiers used to capture datastreams constituting a first
10 program conveyed on a first broadcast channel;

 acquiring a second channel map associating a second transmission channel carrier frequency with data identifiers used to capture datastreams constituting an alternative program conveyed on a second broadcast channel; and

 automatically substituting an alternative program and alternative
15 broadcast channel identified as being available for a User selected channel by said acquired second channel map.

 18. A method according to claim 17, wherein
 said second channel map and said first channel map are allocated a
20 predetermined channel map priority.

 19. A method according to claim 17, wherein
 said second channel map is hierarchically associated with said first
channel map in a database of program specific information.
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 20. A method according to claim 17, wherein
 said second channel map is associated with an event via an indicator
conveyed in event description information.

30 21. A method according to claim 20, wherein
 said indicator is a normally unused indicator.

 22. A method according to claim 20, wherein
 said indicator is conveyed in language information and said event
35 description information is an Event Information Table (EIT).